

Irrigation Canals in the Uinta Basin,
Jepp Thomas Canal
Duchesne Vicinity
Duchesne County
Utah

HAER No. UT-30-G

HAER
UTAH
7-DUCH-V,
1G-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Irrigation Canals in the Uinta Basin, Jepp Thomas Canal

HAER No. UT-30-G

HAER
UTAH
7-DUCH. V,
1G-

Location: Sections 14, 23, 24 R. 8 W., T. 1 S.
Cities of Hanna and Tabiona, Duchesne County, Utah

Quad: Hanna, Tabiona, Farm Creek Park

Date of Construction: 1907

Present Owner: Owen Van Tassell
Tabiona, Utah

Original Use: Irrigation Canal

Present Use: Irrigation Canal

Significance: One of the first tasks that the early homesteaders of the Tabiona Valley needed to accomplish in order to survive was the construction of irrigation canals. The structures found on the Jepp Thomas Canal are representative of pioneer construction techniques and design. The headworks are especially noteworthy. The headgate is made entirely out of wood (rough hewn planks) and 2x4s as is the adjacent chute and drop. The headgate aperture is determined by inserting a wooden dowel or a stout stick into a hole that is one of a series drilled into the 2x4 headgate stem.

Inventoried by: James Jurale, David Stalheim, Craig Fuller
National Park Service
July 1983

DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY

On July 9, 1907, Lorenzo W. Clark of Tabiona, Utah, filed for 2.14 c.f.s. of water to be diverted through a canal 21,018 feet long, 7 feet wide at the top, 4 feet wide at the bottom, and an effective depth of 2 feet. The point of diversion was the west bank of the Duchesne River located in the north corner of Section 14 T. 1 S., R. 8 W. Other men in the construction of the canal in addition to Clark were Lamar Lazenbee and Jessup W. Thomas. Thomas, the first white resident of the Tabiona Valley, brought sheep in from Heber and moved them onto the Uinta and Ouray Reservation in 1900. He used the hillsides and valleys above the present site of Tabiona for pasture and later added more Ute range in Red Creek and Currant Creek to his area. After the reservation was opened on August 28, 1905, Thomas' interests turned to farming. The canal which bears his name was constructed in order to irrigate approximately 128 acres of land on his and his partners' homesteads. At present, the Jepp Thomas Canal is unincorporated and owned by Owen Van Tassel, the grandson of Jessup Thomas and Adrian Wright. Water from the canal irrigates about 200 acres of alfalfa fields and areas of wild grasses which are used as pasturage for dairy cattle.

REFERENCES

State Engineer's Office file #43-163, #1455.

V. Garth Norman, "Cultural Resources Survey of the Duchesne River Area Canal Rehabilitation Program," February 12, 1982, MESA Group., Oreme, Utah.

Taped oral interview with Owen Van Tassell, August 1, 1983, conducted by James Jurale and Craig Fuller.